

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1472

Supporting international health and education grant programs related to autism spectrum disorders.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. DOYLE, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. WOLF, Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA, Mr. PAYNE, and Mr. FORTUÑO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Supporting international health and education grant programs related to autism spectrum disorders.

Whereas the occurrence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in the United States has increased during the past decade from an estimated one in 500 to an estimated one in 150, according to data released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in February 2007;

Whereas autism is a complex neurological disorder that affects an individual in the areas of social interaction and communication and, in some cases, the individual may both experience biomedical problems and exhibit aggressive or self-injurious behavior;

Whereas autism is a spectrum disorder that affects each individual differently and to varying degrees of severity, and people with autism process and respond to information in unique ways;

Whereas the increased number of children diagnosed with autism is a growing and urgent concern for families, healthcare professionals, and educators, as the health and education systems struggle to respond to the needs of this population in a comprehensive manner;

Whereas in a November 2007 report on the identification, evaluation, and management of children with autism, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that all children should be screened for autism twice before they reach the age of two, even if they have no symptoms, due to “evidence that early intensive intervention may result in substantially better outcomes”;

Whereas in the United States, significant efforts are being pursued to expand early diagnosis and the provision of intensive and appropriate educational services to children before age five that can provide children with significant functional improvements;

Whereas the prevalence of autism in developing countries is growing rapidly, including, for example, an estimated 2,500,000 people with an autism spectrum disorder in China, and an estimated 2,000,000 such persons in India;

Whereas health systems in most developing countries are particularly ill-equipped to diagnose and treat autism, including early screening, and the education systems lack trained instructors and specialized services to address the needs of both autistic children and adults;

Whereas there is also a critical need for services for adults with autism, including job training; and

Whereas United States expertise in autism could significantly assist children and adults with autism and their families in developing countries for relatively low costs: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) encourages the Administrator of the United
3 States Agency for International Development (in
4 this Resolution referred to as the “Adminstrator”)
5 to establish and administer a health and education
6 grant program to be known as the “Global Autism
7 Assistance Program” to—

8 (A) support activities by nongovernmental
9 organizations and other service providers, in-
10 cluding advocacy groups, focused on autism in
11 developing countries; and

12 (B) establish a “teach the teachers” pro-
13 gram to train health and education profes-
14 sionals working with children and adults with
15 autism in developing countries;

16 (2) further encourages the Administrator, in
17 consultation with knowledgeable autism organiza-
18 tions such as the World Autism Organization, the
19 Autism Society of America, and Autism Speaks, to

1 designate not fewer than two regions in developing
2 countries that are determined to—

3 (A) require assistance in addressing au-
4 tism; and

5 (B) have sufficient familiarity with issues
6 related to autism to make an effective use of
7 the Global Autism Assistance Program;

8 (3) further encourages the Administrator to se-
9 lect and award a grant to a nongovernmental organi-
10 zation (in this Resolution referred to as “imple-
11 menting nongovernmental organization”) with expe-
12 rience in autism-related issues to implement the
13 Global Autism Assistance Program through selection
14 and awarding of grants to local service providers and
15 advocacy groups focused on autism within the des-
16 ignated regions;

17 (4) encourages the implementing nongovern-
18 mental organization to establish a screening board to
19 be known as the “Project Advisory Board”, includ-
20 ing at least seven voting members who are members
21 of autism advocacy groups, professionals working
22 with autism, or experts otherwise associated with the
23 autism community, and at least two parents from
24 different families of individuals with autism, one
25 medical professional working with individuals with

1 autism, one teacher of individuals with autism, and
2 one individual who has autism, to review grant ap-
3 plications from local service providers or advocacy
4 groups for content and appropriateness, and efforts
5 should be made to ensure objectivity and balance on
6 the part of those serving on the Project Advisory
7 Board, to reduce the potential for conflicts of inter-
8 est, to ensure a broad spectrum of viewpoints, and
9 to include individuals with experience working in the
10 developing world;

11 (5) encourages the Project Advisory Board to
12 award grants for projects or programs that pro-
13 vide—

14 (A) public service announcements and
15 other public media to educate the public about
16 the signs of autism so that children with autism
17 can be diagnosed and treated at the earliest
18 stages;

19 (B) resources for families, such as online
20 web resource centers in local languages, dis-
21 semination of materials to parents of newly di-
22 agnosed children such as information contained
23 in the Center for Disease Control and Preven-
24 tion's publication entitled "Learn the Signs,
25 Act Early", and dissemination of educational

1 aids and guides to help parents with their autis-
2 tic children's development;

3 (C) funding for schools or other edu-
4 cational institutions, focusing on teachers of the
5 youngest students, and including the distribu-
6 tion of specialized equipment and informational
7 materials; and

8 (D) funding for health clinics and medical
9 centers with proven records in addressing au-
10 tism to support their diagnostic and treatment
11 efforts, including assistance with operating ex-
12 penses, personnel, facilities, related supplies,
13 the development of autism assessment testing,
14 and acquisition of specialized equipment includ-
15 ing augmentative communication devices; and

16 (6) further encourages the implementing non-
17 governmental organization, acting on behalf of the
18 Administrator, in consultation with the Project Advi-
19 sory Board, to establish a program, to be known as
20 the "Teach the Teachers Program", to—

21 (A) identify health and education profes-
22 sionals to receive specialized training for teach-
23 ing and working with youth with autism, in-
24 cluding training conducted in two- or three-day

1 workshops at locations within one of the two re-
2 gions designated by the Administrator; and

3 (B) conduct training through two- or
4 three-day biomedical conferences in the two des-
5 ignated regions, including bringing medical and
6 psychological specialists from the United States
7 to train and educate parents and health profes-
8 sionals who deal with autism, including training
9 related to biomedical interventions that can af-
10 fect autism, how nutrition and various meta-
11 bolic issues can impact behavior, the role of ap-
12 plied behavioral analysis, and various occupa-
13 tional and speech therapies in fighting autism.

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